

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 03633

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

BBRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: THE PCE: A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO
THE CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY CONFERENCES FOR
THE PCE'S APRIL CONGRESS, WHOSE PRINCIPAL FUNCTION IS
TO ELECT CONGRESS DELEGATES AND PASS ON 15 POLITICAL
"THESES" AND DRAFT PARTY STATUTES PROPOSED BY THE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC), HAVE BEEN THE SCENE OF RATHER
UNUSUAL AND POSSIBLY SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, PARTICULARLY
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IN MADRID, ASTURIAS AND CATALONIA. THESE DEVELOPMENTS
INCLUDE:

-- (MADRID) AN AGGRESSIVE ATTACK FROM THE FLOOR ON A
NUMBER OF CC PROPOSALS;

-- (ASTURIAS) A WALK-OUT BY 113 DELEGATES WHO CHARGED

THE LEADERSHIP WITH UNDEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOR; AND

-- (CATALONIA) A CONFUSING TURNABOUT, WHEN THE CONFERENCE FIRST APPROVED THE PROPOSED DELETION OF LENINISM

FROM THE PARTY'S SELF-DEFINITION (CONTROVERSIAL "THESIS 15"), BUT THEN ALSO VOTED AGAINST THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND IN FAVOR OF RETAINING THE REFERENCES TO LENINISM IN THE PARTY'S STATUTES.

2. OBSERVERS AGREE THAT NONE OF THIS SHOULD PREVENT THE PARTY LEADERSHIP FROM HAVING ITS WAY AT THE CONGRESS. BUT THIS EFFERVESCENCE CLEARLY HAS DISCOMFITED A PCE HIERARCHY UNACCUSTOMED TO SUCH DISPLAYS OF INDEPENDENT THINKING. MOREOVER, IT MAY WELL PORTEND CONTINUING INTRAMURAL DUST-UPS, AS THE PCE COMES TO GRIPS WITH THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN ITS EXTRAMURAL ESPOUSAL OF DEMOCRACY AND THE PARTY LEADERSHIP'S PERSISTENT HABIT OF JAMMING THE LID DOWN FIRMLY INTERNALLY WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN. END SUMMARY.

3. IN THE MADRID MEETING (MARCH 17-19), MOST OF THE 15 POLITICAL THESES TOOK A RHETORICAL BEATING FROM THE FLOOR. AN OPPOSITIONIST "PROFESSIONAL" TENDENCY (LARGELY LAWYERS), LED BY JOSE MARIA MOHEDANO, JAIME SARTORIUS AND RICARDO LOVELACE, WAS PARTICULARLY OUT-CONFIDENTIAL

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SPOKEN ON THESIS 1 (DEALING IN EFFECT WITH THE LEADERSHIP'S TRACK RECORD) AND THESIS 15 (DELETING LENINISM FROM THE SELF-DESCRIPTION AND DEFINING THE PCE AS SIMPLY "REVOLUTIONARY AND DEMOCRATIC MARXIST").

-- IN THE FORMER CASE, THE "PROFESSIONALS" INSISTED THAT THE LEADERSHIP WAS BEING INSUFFICIENTLY SELF-CRITICAL AND WAS DENYING THE PARTY THE RIGHT AND DUTY TO ANALYZE OBJECTIVELY ITS PAST MISTAKES. ALTHOUGH THE LEADERSHIP BEAT BACK THIS SALLY, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE PROPOSED BY THE "PROFESSIONALS" CAPTURED 167 VOTES AMONG THE SOME 800 DELEGATES.

COMPLETE DEBATE, RATHER THAN THE IMPOSITION OF THE DECISION BY THE HIERARCHY, THEY WERE JOINED IN UNLIKELY TACTICAL ALLIANCE BY THE HARD-LINE PARTY ELEMENTS WHO OPPOSED THE DELETION OF LENINISM. BUT PARTLY AS THE RESULT OF A LENGTHY AND SOMEWHAT EMOTIONAL INTERVENTION BY PCE NUMBER-TWO MAN SIMON SANCHEZ MONTERO, THE CC'S PROPOSAL PASSED EASILY.

ASSEMBLIES END THERE. WHILE THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

HAD THE ANDALUSIAN CONFERENCE WELL IN HAND (ALTHOUGH SOME TENSIONS REPORTEDLY EMERGED IN THE DEBATE OVER THE DELETION OF LENINISM), THE ASTURIAN ASSEMBLY QUICKLY TURNED INTO A DONNYBROOK, WHEN THE PRESIDING COMMITTEE GAVE CC REPRESENTATIVES TIME TO DEFEND THEIR PROPOSALS, BUT THEN REFUSED TO GIVE REGIONAL LEADER JOSE RAMON HERRERO MEREDIZ (ALSO A NATIONAL CC MEMBER) THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND. AT THAT, FELLOW REGIONAL LEADER VICENTE ALVAREZ ARECES (ALSO A NATIONAL CC MEMBER) LED 113 OF THE 500 DELEGATES OUT OF THE CONFERENCE. THE ALVAREZ GROUP LATER RELEASED A

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STATEMENT DENYING THEY INTENDED TO BOLT THE PARTY, BUT CHARGING THE LEADERSHIP WITH HAVING SCREENED OUT DISSENT UNDEMOCRATICALLY EVEN BEFORE THE CONFERENCE AND OF EMPLOYING UNDEMOCRATIC METHODS IN THE MEETING ITSELF. FOR HIS PART, MEREDIZ LATER ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO QUIT THE NATIONAL CC. AS THE RESULT OF THE EXIT OF THE 113, HOWEVER, THE CC'S PROPOSED THESES AND STATUTES WERE THEN APPROVED EASILY.
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5. THE CATALAN COMMUNISTS (PSUC) THEN CONFERENCED IN BARCELONA MARCH 31-APRIL 2 AND SHOCKED THE PARTY LEADERSHIP BY FIRST APPROVING THE DELETION OF LENINISM FROM THE PCE'S SELF-DEFINITION, BUT THEN IN EFFECT REVERSING THEMSELVES AND ALSO APPROVING THE RETENTION
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OF THE TERM IN THE PARTY STATUTES THEMSELVES. THE FORMER RESULTED WHEN THE PSUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VOTED AS A UNIT WITH THE MAJORITY IN FAVOR, WHILE THE OPPOSITE OUTCOME RESULTED IN THE SECOND CASE WHEN COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE ALLOWED TO VOTE INDIVIDUALLY, DIVIDED THEIR VOTE, AND THREW THE VICTORY TO THE PRO-RETENTION FORCES. 10 OF THE 26 COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT, INCLUDING PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTIES DOLORES CALVET AND CIPRIANO GARCIA SANCHEZ, VOTED TO RETAIN LENINISM, WHILE 15, INCLUDING PSUC PRESIDENT GREGORIO LOPEZ RAIMUNDO, SECGEN ANTONIO GUTIERREZ AND DEPUTY JORDI SOLE TURA, VOTED FOR DELETION. ONE MEMBER ABSTAINED. NEEDLESS TO SAY, ALL OBSERVERS HAVE COMMENTED ON THE EXISTENCE OF A DIVISION ON SUCH A BASIC ISSUE IN THE FIRST RANK OF THE PSUC, ALTHOUGH GUTIERREZ LATER CHARACTERIZED IT AS NOTHING MORE THAN A "SEMANTIC" DISPUTE. AS IN ASTURIAS AND MADRID, THERE ALSO WERE CRITICISMS OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP'S ATTEMPTED MANIPULATION OF THE CONFERENCE (CARRILLO WAS PRESENT). THE PSUC LEADERSHIP HAS SCHEDULED A MEETING FOR THIS WEEKEND TO ASSESS THE DAMAGE.

6. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, REGIONAL CONFERENCES IN SANTANDER AND MURCIA, AFTER EXTENDED AND RATHER HEATED DEBATE, FOLLOWED THE LEAD OF MADRID, RATHER THAN CATALONIA, IN ACCEPTING THE CC'S PROPOSED DELETION OF LENINISM.

7. COMMENT: AN INFORMED OBSERVER WHO WAS PRESENT DURING ALL OF THE PUBLIC SESSIONS OF THE MADRID CONFERENCE TOLD EMBOFF THE DEPTH AND HEAT OF THE DEBATE ON THE 15 THESES AND THE STATUTES WERE QUITE REMARKABLE, EVEN THOUGH THE LEADERSHIP, IN THE END, CONSISTENTLY KEPT THE OUTCOME
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OF THE VOTING WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS THROUGH INGRAINED PARTY DISCIPLINE, BEHIND-THE-SCENES ARM-TWISTING, AND DEFT PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVERING. IN ADDITION TO THE INTENSE FLOOR DEBATE ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSALS,

HE ADDED, THERE ALSO WAS CONSIDERABLE GRUMBLING ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP'S MANIPULATION, PARTICULARLY CARRILLO'S "PARACHUTING" INTO THE ELECTION COMMITTEE SESSIONS TO ENSURE THAT THE "RIGHT" CANDIDATES WERE ON THE OFFICIAL PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE LIST. THE CHOICE FOR CHIEF OF THE MADRID ORGANIZATION, SANCHEZ MONTERO HIMSELF, REPRESENTED AN IMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, ALTHOUGH EVEN OPPOSITIONISTS VIEWED SANCHEZ MONTERO AS A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT OVER HIS CONTROVERSIAL PREDECESSOR, VICTOR DIAZ CARDIEL.

8. ALL IN ALL, THE ACCESS TO THESE CONFERENCES BY THE MEDIA AND THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE DEBATE ON SUCH BASIC QUESTIONS AS THE CHARACTER OF THE PARTY -- I.E., LENINIST OR NOT -- HAVE BEEN NOTHING SHORT OF REMARKABLE. INDICATIONS ARE THAT CARRILLO STILL HAS THE UPCOMING CONGRESS IN HAND, BUT THE BATTLE HAS BEEN JOINED OVER THE LEADERSHIP'S RECORD AND METHODS AND THE VERY NATURE OF THE PCE. IT WILL THUS BE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR CARRILLO AND THE PARTY APPARAT TO SHOVE THE GENIE COMPLETELY BACK INTO THE BOTTLE. STABLER

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